

polypeptides and fragments of (i) (a), (b) and (c) bind TACI-L;

(ii) a TACI-L protein, wherein said TACI-L protein comprises a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4;
- (b) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4; or
- (c) a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid sequence that is at least 75% identical to SEQ ID NO:3; wherein said polypeptides and fragments of (ii) (a), (b) and (c) bind TACI; and

(iii) the test compound; and

- b. assaying for the level of interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein;

such that if the level obtained in step (b) differs from that obtained in the absence of test compound, a compound that affects the interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein is identified.

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21. (amended) The method of claim 15 wherein the composition is formed by adding the test compound to a composition comprising the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein.

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26. (amended) The method of claim 25 wherein the soluble extracellular TACI-L comprises a leucine zipper domain.

Please add new claims 29-34:

29. (new) A method of screening a test compound to identify its ability to affect the interaction of TACI with TACI-L, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. forming a composition comprising (i) a TACI protein, wherein said TACI protein comprises a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2; and
- (b) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2; wherein said fragments bind TACI-L;

(ii) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4; and

(iii) the test compound; and

- b. assaying for the level of interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein;

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such that if the level obtained in step (b) differs from that obtained in the absence of test compound, a compound that affects the interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein is identified.

30. (new) A method of screening a test compound to identify its ability to affect the interaction of TACI with TACI-L, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. forming a composition comprising (i) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2;
(ii) TACI-L protein, wherein said TACI-L protein comprises a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4; and
 - (b) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4; wherein said fragments bind TACI-L; and
- (iii) the test compound; and
- b. assaying for the level of interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein;

such that if the level obtained in step (b) differs from that obtained in the absence of test compound, a compound that affects the interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein is identified.

31. (new) A method of screening a test compound to identify its ability to affect the interaction of TACI with TACI-L, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. forming a composition comprising (i) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said fragments bind TACI-L;
(ii) fragments of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4, wherein said fragments bind TACI; and
(iii) the test compound; and
- b. assaying for the level of interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein;

such that if the level obtained in step (b) differs from that obtained in the absence of test compound, a compound that affects the interaction of the TACI protein and the TACI-L protein is identified.

32. (new) A method of screening a test compound to identify its ability to affect the interaction of TACI with TACI-L, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. forming a composition comprising (i) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2; (ii) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4; and (iii) the test compound; and

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